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Reagan Ties Beirut Attack to Curb on Intelligence

Says Predecessors Nearly Ruined CIA

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BOWLING GREEN, Ohio, Sept. 26—President Reagan today blamed the suicide van-bomb attack on the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut that killed two Americans last week on "the near destruction" of U.S. intelligence capability "before we came" into office in 1981.

Answering a student's question after a campaign speech at Bowling Green State University here, Reagan appeared to be trying to shift responsibility for the attack away from his administration and onto that of President Jimmy Carter.

Reagan did not mention Lebanon in his prepared speech, but a uni-

versity senior, Peggy Fitzgerald, asked him about plans to beef up security at other U.S. embassies after the attack in Beirut last Thursday, the third such fatal bombing attack against U.S. installations in Lebanon in 17 months.

Reagan responded by saying he would improve protection for other embassies.

He added, "We're feeling the effects today of the near-destruction of our intelligence capability in recent years before we came here." He said there was a public attitude during those years that "spying is somehow dishonest and let's get rid of our intelligence agents." He then added, "And we did that to a large extent."

Reagan did not elaborate, but a White House aide said "you would not be wrong" to assume that he was referring to the efforts of Carter's intelligence director, Adm. Stansfield Turner, to remove sev-

eral hundred intelligence operatives, largely in covert operations, after critical congressional investigations into the Central Intelligence Agency in the 1970s.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, angrily assailed Reagan's statement about intelligence cuts, saying it "is not only false, it is reckless." He also suggested Reagan was attempting to politicize the agency by his statements and suggested that "an apology is in order. If none is forthcoming, a motion of censure will be in order."

According to congressional intelligence sources, administration officials under President Gerald R.

Ford proposed cutbacks in personnel at the CIA that were implemented in part in 1977 during the first year of the Carter presidency. At that time about 800 employees were moved, told to retire or, in a few cases, fired.

But since fiscal year 1978 there have been substantial annual increases in funding for the CIA. In funding and staffing the agency is well above where it was before the 1977 cuts, congressional sources said.

Reagan's effort to shift blame to previous administrations for the intelligence failure in Lebanon followed his comment Sunday that incomplete security arrangements in Beirut were similar to an unfinished kitchen remodeling job.

That remark drew sharp criticism from Democratic presidential nominee Walter F. Mondale, who said Reagan has let terrorists in Lebanon "humiliate us and push us around and kill our people."

Reagan, who was enthusiastically received by the students who attended, said today that in fighting terrorism "your biggest protection is to—and we're trying to rebuild our intelligence to where you'll find out and know in advance what the target might be and be prepared for it."

"Let me call to your attention what the real choice comes down to. Is there any security that can make you 100 percent safe against a suicide who is intent on bringing in that destruction at the cost of his

own life, as they have done in these bomb-type explosions? . . ."

Reagan also criticized Mondale without mentioning him by name on the eve of the Democratic nominee's meeting Thursday with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko.

"Some propose unilateral disarmament—we disarm in the hope the other side will follow," Reagan said. "Well, there are great saints and great sinners among us. Historically, unilateral disarmament has never worked, it has only encouraged aggressors."

Mondale has proposed temporary moratoriums on weapons development that he would put into place early in his term to try and induce the Soviets into similar measures.